

COMMENCEMENT ADDRESS
The Ohio State University
August 29, 1986

Francille M. Firebaugh

Thank you, President Jennings, members of the Board, Faculty, Graduates, and Guests. My congratulations to the graduates and your families. I come to you today as an experienced commencement speaker. When I completed the sixth grade, the teacher decided we should have graduation ceremonies. I gave the valedictory address, titled "Distant Hills Are Always Greenest." I received a prepared speech which I suppose was appropriate for a high school graduation. I remember only one of the changes the teacher made--she had marked through "as we go out into the world," and substituted "as we go into the seventh grade."

President Jennings did not enclose a speech with his invitation to speak. Indeed, I have chosen my own remarks, and I hope that they are more fitting than those that I gave as I went "into the seventh grade." I am, incidentally, restoring the phrase as you "go out into the world" because I am urging both you as graduates and the university community to cultivate and to increase international perspectives.

The term university echoes "universe"--the whole world (Adler), ...and that term suggests that the university should increase its international perspectives--that is, to provide an academic climate rich in global and universal content--so that the university can live up to its name.

For the past several years, advisors have recommended that university graduates be computer literate. I believe the concerns facing us today and increasingly in the future mean that university graduates should be "globally literate."

I am pleased that The Ohio State University is joining many other universities in expanding its international programs. It is not as though we are initiating an international outlook. Our first international graduate took part in the commencement ceremonies in 1896. Professor Thomas Mendenhall, one of our first faculty members, came to the Ohio Agricultural and Mechanical College in 1870. He spent three years in Japan, from 1878 to 1881, and is considered to be the founder of experimental physics in Japan. Can you imagine the rigors of the trip 100 years ago when we complain today about a two-hour delay.

Currently, the American Council on Education reports that four in ten colleges are committed to expanding their international programs. We can further increase the university's international dimension by enhancing our language and literature instruction, by providing the faculty with more overseas experience, by enlarging the study abroad opportunities, by adding courses that study non-Western societies, and by integrating an international perspective into existing courses.

At a time of curriculum change, I support the belief that "the international dimension should not be a smattering of courses at the periphery of the "supermarket" curriculum, but a part of core educational experience. There is potential, with this international perspective, for infusing new meaning into liberal education, perhaps providing a major new insight into its meaning." (Groenning:52)

We can exchange ideas and scholars with institutions beyond our borders. We can use foreign manuscripts and other library resources. Universities that are serious about international matters have a commitment to and provide support for library collections rich in basic materials in the world's major languages, and they have focused collections in geographic areas of specialization. We can secure exotic botanical specimens and germ plasm from other countries.

Graduate students and faculty should be encouraged to conduct research at the most appropriate location, wherever that might be around the world. I am pleased that we have Ohio State faculty and students participating in scholarly endeavors on all the globe's continents, including both poles. In addition to research in the arts and literature, physical, biological, social and behavioral sciences, the involvement of universities in development assistance in Third World countries provides opportunities for faculty to contribute in their geographic area and subject specialization and to enrich the international perspective of their department. These internationalist measures will strengthen our scholarship.

In short, there are a variety of means by which universities can and do increase the international perspective of students, faculty, and staff. The result is better general and specialized education, better scholarship, and a better environment for learning.

But what about you, our graduates--why should you be caught up in cross cultural and international interests?

I am advancing four reasons--the first, international peace and security; second, economic; the third, cultural; and the last, humanitarian. They compel all of us to cultivate an international perspective.

The first reason for a global view is international security and peace. Pope John the 23rd stated it well: "The social progress, order, security and peace of each country are necessarily connected with the social progress, order, security, and peace of all other countries." Problems in international security and terrorism increase our awareness of the interdependency of nations. Reverberations from terrorism are all around us--thousands in the United States did not go to Europe and the Middle East this summer. These nations have felt, in turn, the economic pinch from the decline in tourism.

The United States is allied with 43 countries and our decisions have consequences for other nations, just as their actions and decisions affect us. You are well aware that our government is making political decisions that affect international security. Current problems in Libya, Afghanistan, El Salvador, and Nicaragua, cry out for information, knowledge, and understanding of the situations.

A recent study panel of the Education Commission of the States wrote that the majority of undergraduate programs are not "preparing students for citizenship and social responsibility in a world made extraordinarily complex by issues such as nuclear proliferation, genetic engineering, and urban renewal. These issues cannot be left entirely to specialists; they require the informed judgment of educated citizens." (Chronicle:13)

I would amend the statement to suggest that many very important decisions are made by politicians who need the "informed judgment of educated citizens" as well as specialists. An informed citizenry can see that national policy frequently has international effects and can help shape correct decisions.

Political decisions affect the development assistance the United States provides to other nations. Ohio State is involved in projects in Burma and Uganda which demonstrate the political will to have a presence in those countries to share our specialized knowledge and to bring graduate students to the United States rather than the Soviet Union or some of the Soviet bloc countries.

In 1984, over 57,000 students from developing countries were on scholarship in academic training in the USSR and Eastern Europe. For the same year, our Agency for International Development sponsored just over 10,000 students from developing countries. (Warsaw Pact:6) (S&T/IT table). International security and peace concerns require informed decision makers. Some of you will be in those roles in the future and all of us have a stake in the decisions.

An increased understanding of other cultures and nations and opportunities for them to know more about us surely enhances our chances for peace. Congressman Paul Simon writes, "Real security will be achieved only when we are able to see the world as it is, not as we would like it to be. We need to understand the culture, language, hopes, and fears of other countries, and they need to understand ours. Such mutual understanding cannot help but lead to less international tension." (Simon:60)

I would like to turn now to economic reasons for increasing your international perspective and cultural understanding. Some basic facts help establish the need:

- o The market value of U.S. investment abroad was \$600 billion in 1985.
- o The market value of foreign investment in the U.S. was \$300 billion in 1985.
- o One out of six jobs in Ohio is directly related to exports.
- o Eighty percent of the goods produced in the United States compete with imports.

Consider your contacts with imported and domestic products this morning. You awakened (probably earlier than usual) to the sound of the G.E. alarm clock made in Mexico, dried your hair with the dryer from Singapore, had a quick cup of Brazilian coffee with a piece of American grown wheat bread, and came to commencement in your German, Japanese, or Yugoslavian made car. I am pleased that your degree was "Made in the U.S.A." with, I hope, an international perspective.

World markets today are highly competitive as are the processes of developing and marketing products. Today the life styles, discretionary incomes, and educational levels are becoming more similar among the populations of Japan, the United States, and Europe.

These economies generate 54 percent of the world's Gross National Product. Shared values and needs rather than sharp differentiation among the markets increasingly govern product development. (Ohmae)

Even though the peoples of these three geographical areas increasingly resemble one another, they still differ widely in beliefs and attitudes. On a recent plane trip, I sat beside one of our alumni from the College of Agriculture. We talked for awhile and I mentioned the commencement speech for today and explained my major points. He then told me that his firm is German owned. He said that differences in outlook often complicate executive decisions within the firm. The Germans concentrate on long-term fiscal stability while Americans, on the other hand, think about short-run profits.

The complexity and interdependence of the world economies require an international perspective to appreciate and understand daily events. The American economy is affected by other nations' decisions, and we, too, are affected by their decisions. We used to say that when the United States sneezes, the world catches a cold. Today, we have to say that when the world sneezes, everyone eventually catches a cold. Last Sunday's New York Times stated: "To curb the giant trade deficit and meet farmers' concerns in an election year, the United States, the world's leading food producer, is subsidizing exports of wheat, sugar, rice and other commodities. State Department officials say these sales have been managed so as to minimize their impact on world markets. But they have piled new pressures on depressed prices, affecting the economies of Australia, Thailand, the Philippines, Indonesia, Argentina, the Caribbean Basin countries and the European Community." The dilemma exemplifies the interdependence of the economies. United States agricultural exports are important to the agricultural and general economy of the United States, but also to the world economic system.

Transactions in international trade can be eased by skill in the languages and knowledge of the cultures. Some of you will find yourselves working in situations where different languages and differing views and approaches must be faced. In some cases your firm may provide the education program or incentive to gain a broadened perspective. Recently during a visit to a tourism and exporting firm in Turkey, I learned that that corporation provides instruction in Japanese each morning to their employees.

Your own commitment to lifelong learning will be critical for developing your full potential in your professions, business, and industry. Many of you will have close ties with foreign firms and some of you will be employed by them. Each of us can be enriched by these contacts outside the Columbus, the Ohio, and the United States boundaries.

Third, the cultural arena: Many of you have developed a global perspective through language study, study abroad, through course work or research with faculty who incorporate an international viewpoint in their courses and research. Some of you have gotten to know one or more of the 2700 international students from 100 countries, including some of the graduates today--many of whom will be leaders in their countries. Others of you have had courses with our faculty and visiting scholars from around the world. Some of you came to the university with an international background--your parents or grandparents immigrated to the United States. Indeed, some of you have immigrated as well, and you have special interests in world affairs and the richness of other cultures.

Future opportunities for continuing your international education will vary widely. Some of you will study another foreign language. Others will pursue some aspect of a foreign culture in depth. Some of you will increase your understanding of different cultures and ways of thinking through experience rather than study--the Peace Corps, travel, international friendships.

The experiences will differ in intensity and the difference reminds me of a recent hike in the Rocky Mountains. My husband, a friend, and I were backpacking and as we passed some hikers, our friend said rather disparagingly, "day hikers--you can tell by their sandals instead of hiking boots, their clean clothes and light packs." We admitted later to our friend that we enjoy day hiking as well as backpacking, but we understood the suggested difference...Some things can be seen only when backpacking and there's a greater depth of experience than in day hiking. Whatever your means for increasing cultural awareness, I encourage you to be a backpacker instead of a day hiker whenever you can be for the depth of understanding you will gain.

Fourth, the humanitarian bases for an international perspective are strong. More than three-quarters of the world's population live in countries with food problems (Kellogg:9). Between 20 and 30 percent of the people in developing countries do not have adequate food and nutrition for normal growth and development. Many exist in incredibly poor housing. What is our responsibility in helping these people?

At a time when we are struggling with balancing the budget, expenditures for foreign assistance are under fire. The United States expenditures of three-tenths of a percent of its Gross National Product in foreign assistance in 1982 is proportionately about one-half that of Great Britain, about one-third that of Germany, one fourth that of the Netherlands and Sweden, and about the same as Japan.

What sort of a stand will you as an informed citizen, an educated person, take? Our nation today is awakening to special needs--you may have participated in Hands Across America, Band-Aid, or Farm-Aid. But we are less responsive to long-term needs--to develop the agriculture and economies of African countries, for example.

It is easy to point to climatic conditions and suggest that the agricultural problem lies there, but the problems are more complex than climate alone. The research base, technology, and the basic economy are each interrelated with the environment in securing and distributing food for survival and improved health and nutrition.

I believe a strong case can be made that long-term solutions must be found in education, agriculture, engineering, health care and many arenas. African countries need universities with vital research programs and effective means of disseminating knowledge and information to the farmers, both men and women, to health care professionals, and to those involved in developing the physical infrastructure of the countries. It takes a long time to build educational institutions and outreach programs--we've been at it for over a century here at Ohio State.

I have suggested today that the international dimension of U.S. universities should be strengthened for academic reasons--because general education and scholarship will be enhanced. We at Ohio State University need your support as alumni as we go about our unfinished agenda in international affairs.

With your workplace and current events as your laboratory, and your own commitment to personal and professional growth as your guide, your international perspective can continue to expand. I am encouraging you as graduates to have a global perspective on the basis of the interest in reduction of international tension and increasing chances of peace, of increased understanding of the complexities and interdependencies of the nations and their economies, of increased appreciation of the richness of the cultures of the world, and of humanitarian concern for the poorly fed and housed people of the world.

As you "go out into the world," I wish you good luck and Godspeed on your journey.

NOTES

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